

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE AGREEMENT H.R. 3010, FY 2006 LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

Overview

The conference agreement on H.R. 3010 provides \$143.0 billion for Labor-HHS-Education and related agencies, on a program basis. This amount is \$31 million over the House bill, \$2.6 billion below the Senate bill, and \$1.5 billion (1.0 percent) below the comparable FY 2005 level.

The conference agreement does not include the \$8.1 billion in emergency funding provided in the Senate bill for pandemic flu preparedness, or any part of the \$7.1 billion requested by the Administration for that purpose.

In addition, the agreement excludes the provision in the Senate bill that would have delayed a payment date for Supplemental Security Income benefits in order to shift costs from FY 2006 to FY 2007 and thereby free up FY 2006 funds for other purposes.

The conference agreement provides the following amounts for the LHHS bill's major agencies:

- \$11.6 billion for the **Department of Labor**: \$37 million below the House bill, \$193 million below the Senate bill, and \$430 million (3.6 percent) below FY 2005.
- \$63.4 billion for the **Department of HHS**: \$251 million over the House bill, \$1.9 billion below the Senate bill, and \$976 million (1.5 percent) below FY 2005.
- \$56.5 billion for the **Department of Education**: \$169 million below the House bill, \$212 million below the Senate bill, and \$59.1 million (0.1 percent) below FY 2005.

The conference agreement freezes or cuts most programs below their FY 2005 levels, including the following:

- International assistance grants to eradicate child labor and protect worker rights through the Bureau of International Labor Affairs are cut \$20 million (21.4 percent).
- Community college training grants are cut by \$125 million (50 percent) in each of FY 2005 and FY 2006.
- Unemployment insurance and employment service offices to help the unemployed are cut \$245 million (6.7 percent).
- Health professions training grants are cut \$206 million (69 percent).

- The Healthy Communities Access Program (\$83 million in FY 2005) is eliminated.
- The Centers for Disease Control is cut \$249 million (3.9 percent).
- Comprehensive school reform state grants (\$205 million in FY 2005) are eliminated.
- Even Start family literacy services are cut \$125 million (55.6 percent)
- Education technology grants are cut \$221 million (44.6 percent).
- The education block grant for local initiatives is cut \$98 million (49.6 percent).
- Safe and drug free schools grants are cut \$87.4 million (20 percent).

Under the conference agreement, only a few programs receive modest increases over FY 2005 and – in most cases – even these increases are below the amounts sought by the Administration. While the conference agreement restores many of the 50 programs proposed for termination in the House bill, these restorations were made at the expense of funding for priority programs, such as community health services, Title 1 grants for low-income children, and special education grants, and Pell Grants.

- NIH receives a \$206 million (0.7 percent) increase.
- Community health centers receive a \$66 million (3.8 percent) increase, which is \$238 million below the request.
- Health information technology within HHS receives a \$45 million increase, which is \$16 million below the request.
- Title 1 grants for low-income children receive a \$100 million (0.8 percent) increase, which is \$502.7 million below the request and the smallest increase in 8 years.
- Special education grants receive a \$100 million (0.9 percent) increase, which is \$408 million below the request and the smallest increase in a decade.
- A new Teacher Incentive Fund to pilot performance-based teacher compensation systems receives \$100 million, which is \$400 million below the request.

Several programs that are frozen at their FY 2005 levels in conference agreement do significantly better relative to the House bill. These include Low-Income Home Energy Assistance and the Community Services Block Grant.

On the other hand, Pell Grants fare worse in the conference agreement than in the House bill. The maximum Pell Grant is frozen at \$4,050 for the 4th consecutive year compared to the \$4,100 provided in the House bill.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The conference agreement provides \$11.6 billion for Department of Labor (DOL) discretionary programs, a \$430 million (3.6 percent) *cut* below FY 2005. The agreement provides \$37 million *less* than the House LHHS bill and \$193 million *less* than the Senate LHHS bill. Job training grants, unemployment and employment services offices, and international assistance grants to protect worker rights are the biggest losers in this agreement. On the other hand, worker protection agencies receive a small increase over the FY 2005 level.

Cuts Critical Training and Employment Services below FY 2005. Although 7.4 million Americans are unemployed, the conference agreement cuts critical services for unemployed and displaced adults and at-risk youth. The most significant cuts include the following:

- **Adult Training Grants** are cut \$31 million (3.4 percent) below FY 2005 to \$866 million – the same as the House bill and the President’s request. The conference agreement provides the lowest funding level for adult training grants in a decade.
- **Youth Training Grants** are cut \$36 million (3.7 percent) below FY 2005 to \$950 million, the same as the House bill and the Administration’s request. Under the conference agreement, 12,000 fewer at-risk youth would find assistance to earn a high school diploma and find a good job.
- The President’s signature **Community College Initiative** is cut in half to \$125 million in FY 2006, and \$125 million is *rescinded* from the \$249 million provided in FY 2005, eliminating skills training for 100,000 people in growth industries such as health care. Both cuts were included in the House bill.
- The **U.S. Employment Service Office**, which matches job seekers with job openings, is cut \$89 million (10.5 percent) below the FY 2005 level. This is a smaller cut than in the House bill. The conference level would eliminate job search assistance to 1.9 million people.
- **Unemployment Insurance Offices**, which help unemployed workers obtain unemployment benefits, are cut \$141 million (5.3 percent) below the 2005 level. This is a deeper cut than in the House bill.

Slashes International Labor Affairs (ILAB) by 21 percent. The conference agreement slashes ILAB by \$20 million (21.4 percent), from \$93.2 million in FY 2005 to \$73.2 million in FY 2006. The agreement restores 75 percent of the cut

in the House bill. ILAB helps eradicate abusive child labor, and protect worker rights and wages around the world.

Rescinds \$125 million from New York State Workers Compensation Funds.

The conference agreement rescinds \$125 million from unobligated funds promised by the Administration to compensate injured New York State rescue and recovery workers after the September 11th attack, as proposed in both the House and Senate bills. The agreement also drops provisions in the Senate bill providing \$50 million New York worker compensation and \$75 million for health monitoring of persons involved in the New York State recovery effort.

Freezes funding for dislocated workers. The conference agreement provides \$1.4 billion for dislocated worker state formula grants and national emergency grants (excluding funds earmarked for the Community College Initiative). The agreement provides the same funding as in FY 2005 and \$54 million less than the House bill.

Freezes funding for older workers. The conference agreement includes \$437 million for the Community Service Employment for Older Americans Program, the same as the House bill and the Administration's request. The older workers program provides seniors with part-time jobs that enable them to serve their local communities. Of nearly 10 million eligible seniors, only 92,000 would be served in FY 2006, a 17 percent decrease from 2001.

Provides a small increase for Job Corps. The conference agreement includes \$1.6 billion for Job Corps, a \$21 million (1.4 percent) increase over FY 2005 and a \$31 million increase over the House bill. Job Corps operations receive a 2 percent increase. Despite a \$350 million facility repair backlog, funding for Job Corps facilities is cut 7.0 percent. Job Corps has an effective track record, but funds are sufficient to serve only 2 percent of 2.9 million out-of-school youth, ages 16-24, who live in poverty.

Provides a small increase for migrant and season farmworkers. The conference agreement provides \$80.1 million for the migrant and seasonal farmworkers program, a \$4.3 million (5.7 percent) increase over FY 2005 and the House bill. The Administration sought to terminate the program.

Provides a modest increase for worker protection agencies. The conference agreement provides \$1.3 billion for activities to protect worker safety, health, pay and benefits, a \$33 million (2.5 percent) increase over FY 2005 and about the same as the House bill.

- The **Employee Benefits Security Administration** receives a 2.8 percent increase and the **Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation** (limitation on administrative expenses) receives an 11.5 percent increase over the 2005 level for pension protection activities.

- The **Employment Standards Administration** receives a 3.6 percent increase to administer labor standards, union financial reporting requirements, federal contractor compliance with non-discrimination requirements, and worker compensation programs.
- The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration** receives a 2.8 percent increase for activities to protect workers from occupational hazards. The LHHS agreement rejects the Administration's request to terminate OSHA's Susan Harwood training grants, which are restored to the current level of \$10.2 million.
- The **Mine Safety and Health Administration** receives less than a 1 percent increase for mine safety enforcement, standards setting, and technical assistance activities.

Cuts the Office of Disability Policy. The conference agreement adopts the Administration's proposal to eliminate grants that support the delivery of employment services to persons with disabilities. As a result, the Office of Disability Policy is cut \$19 million (40.8 percent) below FY 2005, the same as the House bill.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

For most programs at the Department of HHS, the conference product is quite similar to the House-passed bill. The main differences are that the conference agreement—

- maintains the Community Services Block Grant at last year's level (rather than cutting it in half as proposed by the House);
- maintains the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program at last year's level (rather than cutting it 8 percent as proposed by the House);
- continues the \$100 million HHS contribution to the Global AIDS Fund (rather than eliminating it as proposed by the House);
- alleviates a small portion of the cuts made by the House in the Health Professions program (cutting that group of programs 69 percent below FY 2005 in place of the 84 percent cut made by the House bill); and
- provides \$160 million for construction at the Centers for Disease Control (instead of the \$30 million proposed by the House).

In a few cases, most notably Head Start and grants to Health Centers, the conference agreement has come back at a *lower* level than provided in *either* version of the bill. This leaves Head Start funding slightly below last year.

Like the House bill, the agreement cuts a number of programs below last year's level (or eliminates them entirely)—especially in the health area. Key examples include—

- elimination of the Healthy Communities Access Program;
- the 69 percent cut in Health Professions mentioned above (with several programs in this category eliminated);
- a 73 percent cut in Rural Health Outreach grants (plus cuts or eliminations in other rural health programs),
- a 3 percent cut in the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant (leaving its purchasing power about 20 percent below FY 2002);
- a 24 percent cut in block grants for state health departments; and
- an 11 percent cut in grants to state and local health departments to improve preparedness against bioterrorist attacks and naturally occurring epidemics.

For the National Institutes of Health, the conference agreement provides essentially the same amount as the House-passed bill and the President's budget request (once the numbers are put on a comparable basis). This is the smallest increase in 36 years, and not enough to keep the number of research grants from declining for the second year in a row.

Finally, the conference agreement includes nothing for the President's recent request for roughly \$7.1 billion in emergency funding to improve preparedness against an influenza pandemic—mainly by improving domestic vaccine manufacturing capability and stockpiling vaccines and antiviral drugs. The Senate bill included roughly \$8.1 billion for these purposes.

Health Care

Within HHS, some of the largest cuts are directed at programs that help shore up the health care safety net for people lacking other access to care, as well as at programs that try to alleviate shortages of health care providers in underserved urban and rural areas.

For grants to **Health Centers** for services to the uninsured, the conference agreement provides \$34 million *less* than the House-passed bill, \$89 million *less* than the Senate bill, and \$238 million *less* than requested by the Bush Administration. The conference agreement's level is a \$66 million (4 percent) increase over last year, but about \$53 million of that increase has already been committed by the Department of HHS to fund applications for new health center sites or expanded services that were approved in FY 2005 but for which funds were not available that year. Under the conference agreement, health centers will see very little, if any, increases to cover rising health care costs or rising numbers of uninsured patients, and the Administration's initiative to expand the number and capacity of health centers will essentially be ended.

Further, the conference agreement terminates entirely the **Healthy Communities Access Program** (HCAP), which received \$83 million in FY 2005. This program makes grants to local consortia of hospitals, health centers, and

other providers to help build better integrated systems of care for uninsured and underinsured Americans, including better access to specialists and prescription drugs. HCAP grants normally last three years, but under the conference report about 70 existing grantees will have their funding terminated.

The conference agreement cuts the **Maternal and Child Health Block Grant** by \$24 million or 3 percent, bringing the program's real per-capita purchasing power about 20 percent below its FY 2002 level. These grants help states provide prenatal care for mothers and preventive health services and medical treatment for children lacking other sources of health care, including children with disabilities and other special needs.

The measure also cuts a key rural health program—**Rural Health Outreach Grants**—by 73 percent, from \$39 million in FY 2005 to just \$11 million in FY 2006. These grants provide a flexible source of funding to help rural communities address their high-priority health needs. Funds are used, for example, to help support rural clinics, to expand dental care or mental health services, to improve treatment of chronic diseases, or to increase use of telemedicine techniques to serve remote areas. Under the conference agreement, no new rural health outreach grants would be made, and existing grantees would see their funding cut by about 45 percent.

As for **other rural health programs**, the conference agreement terminates grants for research on rural health issues (\$8 million in FY 2005) and a small grant program to improve training for emergency services personnel in rural areas. It also cuts from \$8.9 million to \$1.5 million two programs that help communities, especially in rural areas, gain access to automatic external defibrillators which can save the lives of heart attack patients.

The conference agreement also terminates **health care access planning grants**, which are used by state governments to research the needs and characteristics of the uninsured and to plan ways of expanding health coverage, including design of demonstration projects. The program, which received \$11 million last year, has helped develop health care coverage initiatives in a number of states.

Turning to the **health professions** area, the conference agreement devastates most of these programs other than those related to nursing, cutting overall funding for the "title VII" professions programs from \$300 million in FY 2005 to \$94 million in FY 2006.

Four of these programs are aimed specifically at increasing the numbers of minority and disadvantaged students attending medical, dental and other health professions schools, in the expectation that these students are particularly likely to practice in underserved communities after graduation. The conference agreement cuts this group of programs 56 percent. The **Health Careers Opportunity Program** (which encourages high school students to consider

health careers and works with college students to help them prepare for training in the health professions) has its funding reduced from \$36 million in FY 2005 to \$4 million in FY 2006. **Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students** are cut from \$47 million to \$35 million.

In addition, another group of health professions programs support medical school and graduate training in **primary care** specialties like family medicine and general internal medicine, to help maintain and increase the supply of practitioners to meet the needs of rural and other underserved communities. Among other things, these grants support training opportunities for students and medical residents in rural or inner-city clinics, to encourage participants to consider practicing in those areas. Under the conference agreement, funding for primary care medicine and dentistry training is cut by two thirds, from \$89 million in FY 2005 to \$28 million in FY 2006.

The conference report also terminates outright a \$32 million program to improve training in **geriatric medicine**.

Infectious Disease Control and Other Public Health

The conference agreement sets overall appropriations for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at \$6.150 billion—\$249 million (or 4 percent) below last year.

Within this total, the agreement provides increases of \$37 million (7 percent) for **immunization programs** and \$12 million (56 percent) for **Global Disease Detection** initiatives. The immunization increase is almost entirely intended for flu vaccine, with no additional funds provided to keep up with the rising cost of child vaccines (or to catch up with past increases in those costs). Beyond these amounts, some small increases are scattered throughout various CDC program areas, such as infectious diseases, chronic diseases, birth defects and developmental disabilities, and occupational safety and health.

At the same time, the conference agreement calls for significant *reductions* in support for state and local public health departments. This includes a \$31 million (24 percent) cut in the **Preventive Health Block Grant**, which supports a wide range of basic public health functions such as responding to disease outbreaks, immunizing children, improving care for people with chronic diseases like diabetes and asthma, and promoting dental health. The measure also makes a \$96 million (11 percent) cut in **grants to health departments for preparedness against bio-terrorism and other public health emergencies**. (Both of these cuts are measured against the FY 2005 enacted level, which in both cases was subsequently reduced by transfers and reprogrammings.)

Biomedical Research (NIH)

For the National Institutes of Health, the conference agreement is virtually identical to the President's budget request, setting funding for almost all of the individual NIH Institutes at exactly the amount requested and providing an overall increase above the request of just \$11 million or 0.04 percent.

While it may appear that the conference agreement adds about \$108 million to the amount sought by the Administration, that increase virtually disappears when the numbers are put on a comparable basis. Like the House and Senate bills, the conference report funds research on countermeasures against radiological and chemical weapons in the regular NIH budget, whereas in previous years and in the Administration's FY 2006 proposal these activities were funded *outside* the NIH budget in the Public Health Emergency Fund. When the President's request is adjusted to include the countermeasures program within NIH, the budget request is \$28.615 billion—just slightly less than the \$28.626 billion included in the conference report.

The conference agreement provides about \$111 million more for NIH than the House-passed bill. However, \$100 million of that is to continue the transfer to the Global AIDS Fund, which the House bill eliminated. In terms of NIH *programs* (as distinct from amounts for transfer elsewhere), the conference agreement is just \$11 million above the House bill and \$797 million *below* the Senate bill.

Leaving aside the shift in funding source for the radiological/chemical countermeasures program, the conference agreement provides an increase for NIH of \$155 million, or 0.5 percent, above FY 2005. This is the smallest percentage increase in 36 years, and 2.6 percent short of what NIH estimates would be needed just to keep up with inflation in research costs.

Since it is virtually identical to the Administration's budget, presumably the conference agreement will have very similar effects on the number of NIH research grants. According to Administration estimates, its proposed funding level would cause the total number of research project grants to decrease for the second year in a row – producing a reduction of 505 grants relative to FY 2004. The projected “success rate”-- the percentage of competing grant applications that receive funding – is 21 percent in FY 2006, compared to a peak of 32 percent in FY 2001.

Human Services

The conference agreement freezes most HHS human services programs at the FY 2005 level, including LIHEAP, the Community Services Block Grant, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and numerous smaller programs.

In the case of Head Start, the agreement produces a slight (0.2 percent) reduction below last year, in contrast to the small increases provided by both the House and Senate versions of the bill.

The measure does include a \$91 million (19 percent) increase for Refugee Assistance. However, most of this increase is needed just to maintain the current policy of providing 8 months of transitional cash and medical assistance for newly arrived refugees. The number of refugee arrivals has been rising (following a sharp fall-off after 9/11) and is now close to pre-9/11 levels. The substantial carry-over balances that had accumulated over the past few years have now been drawn down, and a significant increase in appropriations is therefore needed to maintain the program.

The conference agreement sets funding for abstinence education at the House-passed level of \$114.5 million—a 10.8 million or 10 percent increase above last year. It also increases appropriations for the Compassion Capital Fund from \$55 million in FY 2005 to \$65 million in FY 2006 (compared to \$100 million requested by the President), and includes a \$4 million (2.4 percent) increase for Developmental Disabilities.

Within the Administration on Aging, the conference agreement provides a 0.5 percent increases for seniors' nutrition programs, including Meals on Wheels—far less than what would be needed just to keep up with rising costs. It also includes a small \$2 million (1.3 percent) increase for the National Family Caregiver Support Program. For most other Administration on Aging programs, the agreement freezes funding at last year's level.

Health Care Information Technology

The conference agreement includes \$61.7 million for the Administration's health information technology initiative in the Office of the Secretary. While a very substantial increase above the \$16.9 million provided for this initiative last year, this is less than the \$77.8 million sought by the Administration. In addition, the measure includes \$50 million for health-IT-related activities at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The conference agreement provides \$56.5 billion for Department of Education discretionary programs, a \$59 million (0.1 percent) *cut* below FY 2005 – the first cut in the Federal education investment in a decade. The agreement provides \$169 million *less* than the House bill and \$212 million *less* than the Senate bill.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DISCRETIONARY APPROPRIATIONS

(Program level, \$ in millions)

Fiscal Year	Appropriation	Change To Prior Year	
		Dollars	Percent
1997	26,645	3,609	16 percent
1998	29,903	3,258	12 percent
1999	33,521	3,618	12 percent
2000	35,606	2,085	6.2 percent
2001	42,231	6,625	18.6 percent
Enactment of No Child Left Behind			
2002	49,936	7,705	18.2 percent
2003	53,114	3,178	6.4 percent
2004	55,662	2,548	4.8 percent
2005	56,577	916	1.6 percent
2006 LHHS Conference	56,518	-\$59	-0.1 percent

Cuts No Child Left Behind (NCLB) by \$784 million below FY 2005. The conference agreement *cuts* NCLB funding by \$784 million (3.2 percent) below the current level. Under the agreement, NCLB funding is \$13.1 billion below the FY 2006 authorization and the cumulative shortfall since enactment of NCLB is \$40.1 billion. Thus, in 2006, school districts will need to achieve increasingly rigorous NCLB academic standards, administer annual reading and math tests to 3rd through 8th graders, and meet new requirements for highly-qualified teachers with fewer Federal resources.

Restores most programs eliminated in the House bill and President's budget, but pays for this restoration out of Title 1, IDEA and Pell Grants. The conference agreement restores 18 of the 24 education programs eliminated in the House bill. However, the two most important K-12 education programs – Title I and IDEA – bear the brunt of financing this restoration. The agreement provides only a \$100 million increase for each of these programs, instead of the \$603 million increase for Title I and \$508 million increase for IDEA recommended in the Administration's budget. The increase in the maximum Pell grant award in the House bill is also sacrificed to pay for these restorations.

Denies Title 1 academic services promised by NCLB to 3.1 million children. The conference agreement includes \$12.8 billion for Title 1 reading and math assistance for low-income children, less than a one percent (\$100 million) increase over FY 2005 and the smallest increase in 8 years. The agreement provides the same level as the House bill, but \$503 million less than the request. Title 1 funding is \$9.9 billion below NCLB's funding promise for FY 2006, denying academic help and hope to 3.1 million low-income children.

Falls off glidepath to fully funding IDEA. The conference agreement includes \$10.7 billion for IDEA Part B state grants for 6.9 million disabled children, less than a one percent (\$100 million) over FY 2005 and the smallest increase in a decade. The agreement provides \$50 million less than the House bill, \$408 million less than the Administration's request, and \$4.0 billion less than the Republican promise to put special education on a glidepath to full funding. Under the agreement, the federal contribution toward special education costs will drop from 18.6 percent in FY 2005 to 18.0 percent in FY 2006.

Eliminates comprehensive school reform (CSR) grants to 1,000 schools. The conference agreement eliminates CSR state grants, terminating ongoing school reform grants to approximately 1,000 schools. (The agreement retains a small amount, \$8 million, for national and dissemination activities.) According to the Education Department, CSR grants are well targeted to high-need schools with disproportionate enrollments of low-income, minority and limited English proficient students.

Slashes Even Start by 56 percent. The conference agreement slashes the William F. Goodling Even Start Program by \$125 million, from \$225 million in FY 2005 to \$100 million in FY 2006. The House bill did not include this deep cut. Even Start supports family-centered education services for low-literate, low-income parents and their young children. GAO reported in 2002 that most Even Start families had annual incomes less than \$15,000, almost 75 percent of Even Start parents were unemployed, and 86 percent of Even Start parents had not completed high school.

Slashes education technology by 45 percent. Federal support for up-to-date technology in the nation's schools is slashed by \$221 million, from \$496 million in FY 2005 to \$275 million in FY 2006 in the agreement – on top of a 28 percent cut last year. This is a deeper cut than in the House bill. One in four states have no other dedicated technology funds to track NCLB student achievement data, improve teachers' use of technology, and close the achievement gap through online learning.

Slashes education block grant for local initiatives in half. The conference agreement slashes the innovative education block grant by \$98 million, from \$198 million in FY 2005 to \$100 million in FY 2006. The House bill did not include this deep cut. Schools use these funds for strategic education investments determined at the local level.

Cuts safe and drug free (SDF) schools grants by 20 percent. The conference agreement cuts SDF schools grants by \$87 million, from \$437 million in FY 2005 to \$350 million in FY 2006. This is a deeper cut than in the House bill. Nearly 14,000 school districts rely on SDF funding for school safety, emergency preparedness, drug prevention, and anti-violence activities.

Freezes after school centers again. The conference agreement freezes after school center funds at just below \$1 billion for essentially the 4th consecutive year. This level is \$1.3 billion below the NCLB authorization, which would have provided after school enrichment for another 1.7 million children. About 14 million kids are unsupervised in the hours after school each day, yet only 38 percent of all applications for Federal after school aid could be funded in 2004.

Freezes other key NCLB programs. The conference agreement freezes:

- **Teacher Quality State Grants** at \$2.9 billion for the 3rd consecutive year, despite the need to ensure every classroom has a highly qualified teacher. In contrast, the bill provides \$100 million to begin a new **Teacher Incentive Fund** to support pilots of performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems.
- **Impact Aid** payments at \$1.2 billion for 1,300 school districts enrolling over 1 million military and other Federally-connected children.
- **English language training** at \$676 million – the 3rd consecutive year the program has been frozen or cut. More than 4.4 million students need to improve their ability to read and speak English.

Other key NCLB programs frozen at their FY 2005 levels include **Reading First, Early Reading First, State Assessments, Rural Education, and Smaller Learning Communities.**

Shortchanges investments in math and science. The conference agreement provides \$184 million for math and science partnerships, a 3 percent (\$5 million) increase over FY 2005 compared to the 6.4 percent (\$11 million) increase in the House bill. The agreement provides well below the 51 percent (\$90 million) increase requested by the Administration. Math and science partnerships strengthen math and science instruction, thereby making American students more competitive in the global economy.

Terminates six education programs. The conference agreement terminates six education programs in FY 2006, as proposed in the House bill:

- **Comprehensive school reform grants** (\$205 million in FY 2005)
- **Occupational & employment information** (\$9.3 million in FY 2005)
- **Literacy for prisoners** (\$5.0 million in FY 2005)
- **Tech-prep demonstration** (\$4.9 million in FY 2005)
- **Community technology centers** (\$5.0 million in FY 2005)
- **Interest subsidy grants** (\$1.5 million in FY 2005)

Freezes vocational education state grants. The conference agreement provides \$1.1 billion for vocational education state grants – essentially freezing

funding for the 3rd consecutive year. The agreement rejects the Administration's proposal to end the program. Nearly half of all high school students and about one-third of college students take vocational courses as a major part of their studies.

Freezes adult education state grants. The conference agreement provides \$570 million for adult education services to help functionally illiterate adults acquire basic literacy skills – a prerequisite for success in the workplace. These grants will essentially be frozen for the 5th consecutive year, even though more than 90 million Americans have not finished high school or have basic skills deficiencies.

Fails to raise maximum Pell Grant by \$100 as Republicans promised. The President and House Republicans promised low-income students a \$100 increase in the maximum Pell Grant. The House bill included a \$50 increase in the Pell award. However, the conference agreement freezes the maximum grant at \$4,050 for the 4th consecutive year, even while the cost of a 4-year public college education has increased \$3,095 (34 percent) since 2001. Moreover, the agreement freezes all other student financial aid and support programs: **Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, College Work Study, Perkins Loans, LEAP, TRIO and GEAR UP.** The agreement includes \$4.3 billion in mandatory funds to pay off the Pell Grant program budget shortfall, as proposed in both House and Senate bills.

Backslides on developing advanced expertise in critical foreign languages. Although the nation continues to face shortages of language experts after September 11th, the conference agreement fails to make additional investments to boost the number of students with advanced proficiency in languages spoken in the critical regions of Central and South Asia, Middle East, Indonesia, and Africa. The agreement freezes funding for the Title VI international programs at \$107 million - less than the 2003 level. A \$4 million (23.2 percent) increase is provided for K-12 foreign language training.

RELATED AGENCIES

Corporation for Public Broadcasting

The conference agreement includes a \$400 million FY 2008 advance appropriation for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), as provided in both House and Senate bills. This level is the same as CPB's FY 2007 and FY 2006 appropriations. The agreement rejects the Administration's request to end the practice of providing advance appropriations for public broadcasting and to rescind \$10 million from CPB's FY 2006 appropriation.

For digital conversion grants, the agreement provides \$30 million, a \$9.4 million (23.8 percent) cut from FY 2005. For the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

satellite replacement project, the agreement provides \$35 million, a \$4.7 million (11.8 percent) cut from FY 2005. The House bill did not provide separate funding for these activities.

In total, the agreement provides \$465 million for CPB in FY 2006, about the same level as in FY 2005.

Social Security Administration

The conference agreement includes \$9.199 billion for the operating expenses of the Social Security Administration (including its role in implementing the Medicare drug benefit). This is \$189 million less than the President's budget request, \$80 million less than the House-passed bill, and \$130 million less than the Senate bill.

Institute for Museum and Library Services

The conference agreement includes \$250 million for the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a \$31 million (11 percent) cut below FY 2005 and the same as the House bill. The agreement includes \$850,000 for a new program of museum grants authorized by the African American History and Culture Act, a \$150,000 reduction below the House bill and \$1.15 million below the request.

Corporation for National and Community Service

The conference agreement provides \$909 million for the Corporation for National and Community Service, an \$18 million (1.9 percent) cut below the FY 2005 and the same as the House bill. Within this total, AmeriCorps receives \$268 million, a \$20 million cut (7.0 percent) below FY 2005 and the same as the House level. The agreement increases funding for the National Senior Volunteer Corps and other domestic volunteer programs by 2.0 percent.

SIGNIFICANT GENERAL PROVISIONS

Redesignation of Areas under the Workforce Investment Act. The conference agreement includes a Senate provision directing the Secretary of Labor to take no action to re-designate local areas under the Workforce Investment Act until legislation reauthorizing the Act is enacted into law. The House bill included a similar provision.

Job Corps. The conference agreement includes a provision to transfer the Job Corps program out of the Employment and Training Administration and into the Office of the Secretary in the Department of Labor. Neither the House nor Senate bills included this provision.

Annual Fit Testing of Respirators for Occupational Exposure to Respirators. The conference agreement retains House bill language that restricts OSHA from requiring annual fit testing of respirators for workers exposed to tuberculosis.

BLS Data on Women Workers. The conference agreement includes a Senate provision that requires BLS to continue to collect data on women workers in the Current Employment Statistics (CES) Survey. The House bill did not include this provision.

“Abortion Non-Discrimination” Provisions. The conference agreement includes House language (often referred to as the Weldon Amendment) requiring cutoff of all funds in the bill to any federal agency or program or state or local government that discriminates against any health professional, hospital, health insurer or other health care institution on the basis that the health care provider or institution does not provide, cover, or make referrals for, abortion.

Health Information Privacy. The conference agreement does not include legislative language that had been included in both the House and Senate bills requiring that any Health Information Technology strategic plan developed by the Department of HHS provide for notification to patients if their information maintained by the Department is lost, stolen or misused. Instead, the agreement includes report language instructing HHS to continue to study the problem and to report to Congress within 90 days describing the Department’s plans for addressing privacy issues in its Health IT program.

Use of Social Security Numbers on Medicare Cards. The conference agreement does not include a House-passed provision prohibiting use of funds to place Social Security numbers on Medicare cards (because of identify theft concerns) or a Senate provision directing HHS to report to Congress by next June describing plans to shift to use of different numbers for Medicare purposes. Instead, it includes report language stating that the conferees consider this problem to be of utmost urgency and expect HHS to accelerate plans to convert to different numerical identifiers for Medicare.

Termination of Specific NIH Grants. The conference agreement does not include House-passed language requiring termination of two specific grants made by the National Institute of Mental Health.

Scientific Advisory Committee Appointments. The agreement includes the Senate version of language designed to address the problem of improper political considerations in making appointments to scientific advisory committees. This language bars use of funds to request that a candidate for appointment disclose his or her political affiliation or voting history or the position that the candidate holds with respect to political issues not directly related to the advisory committee’s work. The conference report also includes related Senate language

prohibiting use of funds to disseminate scientific information that is deliberately false or misleading.

Erectile Dysfunction (ED) Drugs. The conference agreement retains a provision in the Senate bill prohibiting funds in the bill for reimbursement for ED drugs. A similar provision was contained in the House bill.

Power Wheelchairs. The conference agreement includes a Senate provision that would delay implementation or enforcement of a regulation on powered mobility devices such as motorized scooters and wheelchairs. The House bill did not include this provision.

Choctaw Indian Education Authorization. The conference agreement includes a Senate provision that authorizes not less than \$2 million for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians under the Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Education Through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO) program, as proposed in the Senate bill. The House bill did not include this provision.

Aliens of Extraordinary Ability. The conference agreement includes a Senate provision that amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit an Olympic-eligible ice dancer to represent the United States in the 2006 Olympics. The House bill did not include this provision.

Designation of MidAmerica St. Louis Airport. The conference agreement does not include a Senate provision designating the MidAmerica St. Louis Airport in southern Illinois as an international point of entry. The House bill did not include a similar provision.